to KEATING
31 JULY 69

cc. Wesley
Schaner

31 July 1969

Mrs. Claire Keating
35 Woodridge Cresc.
Bayshore Apts.(Apt.512)
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Mrs. Keating:

This letter concerns your association with James Earl Ray. I understand why initially you will be annoyed at receiving it, but, for the sake of things that are far more important than your feelings or mine, I urge you to believe that I intend no harm or embarrassment for you, and that I want nothing but justice for Mr. Ray. Although I write this without his knowledge or consent, please believe that I am writing it in his interest.

I am an American, a teacher of Greek and Latin here at Queen's University in Kingston, where I came with my family in 1965. Since early 1967, alone and with others, I have been engaged in investigations concerning the political assassinations that have occurred in the United States during the past six years, chiefly those of President Kennedy, Senator Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King.

In learning what I could about the assassination of Dr. King, I became convinced, as I am sure you are, that James Earl Ray did not shoot the man. It is likely that he was near the scene when King was killed and that unknowingly he assisted the true killer, but I am certain, in spite of Ray's forced confession, that Ray is innocent of murder, that he never even contemplated murder. It is clear, though, that he was used cruelly by those who did.

For reasons which are difficult for me to explain in this brief letter, I would like to help Ray. I write this as an appeal in the hope that you, too, will be willing to lend him a hand. If you have been reading about the case, you must know that those whom Ray trusted not only have turned their backs on him, but have forcibly cast him into the eager jaws of public officials who wish nothing more than to use him as a scapegoat for a crime which they and you and I know he did not commit. He was used in a grievous manner, and now is grievously alone, virtually without help and virtually without friends.

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I don't know whether there is anything that you can do except to offer your good wishes to him and to the few who want to help him. But it may be that you know something whose relevance to the case you do not understand; for that reason I would like to talk with you for a while. I know much about the case and may be able to spot an important detail that you have not considered. I have no assurance that our talk would result in a substantive improvement in our chances of doing some good for Ray, but I think it necessary that you talk with someone who wants to act in Ray's interest. You have already spoken with William Bradford Huie, but Huie now stands in the front rank of those who barter integrity for money. Like others whom Ray trusted, Huie has made his fortune acting not in Ray's behalf, but in behalf of those who have made a patsy out of Ray.

Please let me talk with you. I assure you that I shall treat our conversation with whatever degree of confidence you desire. I regret that you cannot escape involvement in the case, for your association with Ray is a matter of public knowledge, but in talking with me you will not run the risk of becoming more involved than you are. I am sure of that much.

Please write and tell me that you are willing to speak with me. When I learn that, I'll phone and make an appointment to see you (please send your phone number).

Finally, I offer a blatant appeal that you try to help an unfortunate man who has had nothing but undeserved trouble and few real friends.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Bernabei

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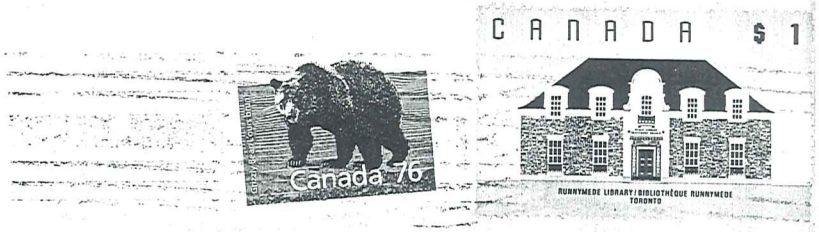

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